DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 735 SO 025 846

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TITLE The Flag of the United States and State Flags, Seals & Mottoes.
INSTITUTION Republican Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC.; United States Capitol Historical Society, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 45p.
AVAILABLE FROM U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20002.
PUB TYPE Guides - General (050) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Government (Administrative Body); Higher Education; Social Studies; *State History; *Symbolism; *United States History
IDENTIFIERS *Flags

ABSTRACT

A detailed and descriptive narrative is presented about the U.S. flag's history, development, symbolic meaning, and overall importance. Information about the U.S. seal and how it identifies what the United States stands for as a nation is given. A motto is defined as a word or phrase that expresses one's principles, religious, moral, or patriotic beliefs. Each of the fifty states has a flag, seal, and motto that signifies and describes that state's heritage. A 39-item bibliography relating to flags, seals, and mottoes concludes the guide. (JAG)

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THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES AND State Flags, Seals & Mottoes

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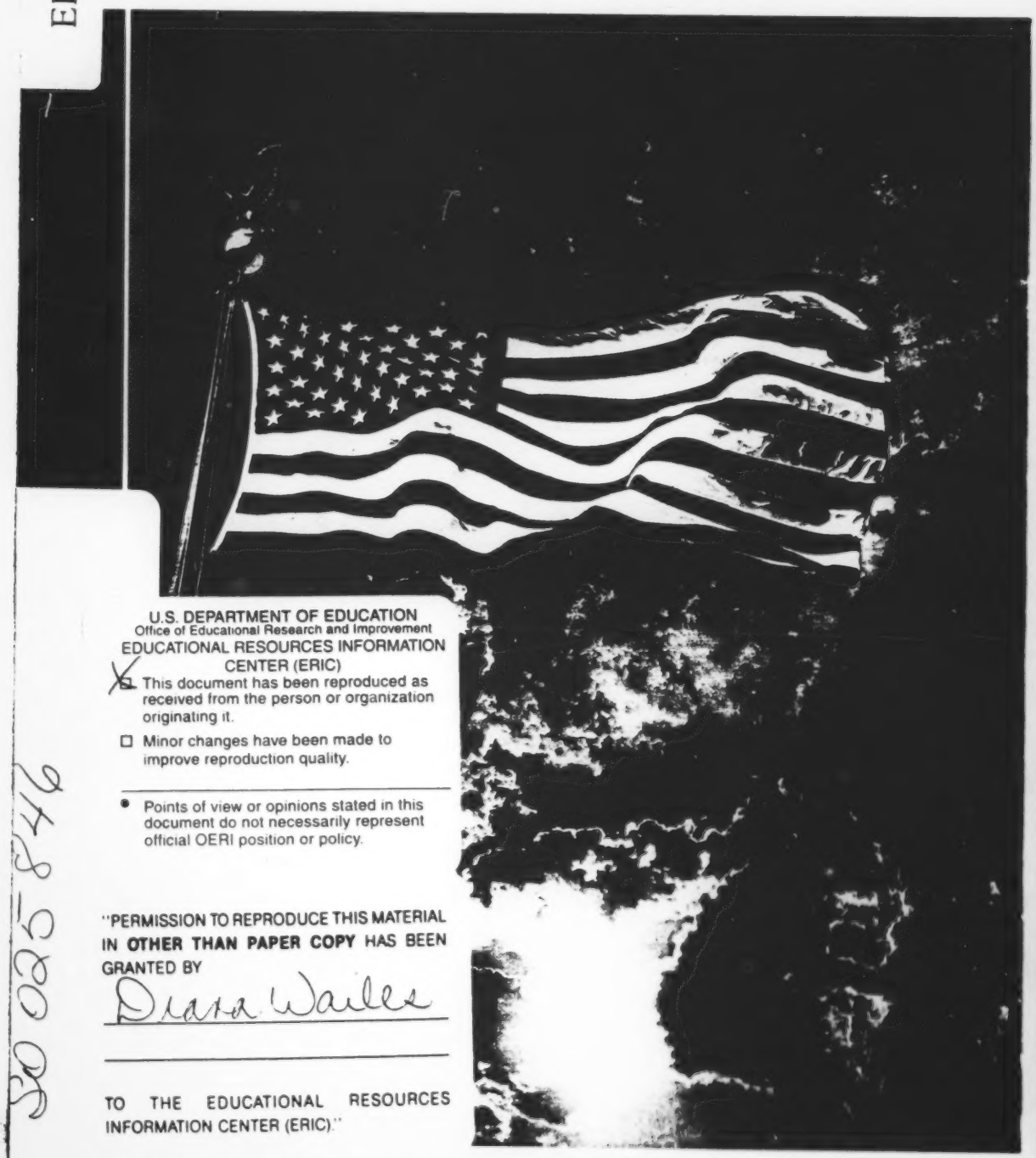

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- Each state assigned to a star in the U.S. Flag
- Eight pages of full color illustrations • Comprehensive bibliography

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In 1978, a charter granted by the U.S. Congress authorized the Society to research, publish, create items, medals and materials of historical interest in order to preserve and enhance the Capitol of the United States. The Society currently operates a visitor information center in the Capitol, publishes guidebooks to the Capitol and to Washington, D.C., publishes an annual historical calendar, issues an annual historical medal, conducts an annual symposia series, publishes a quarterly newsletter, produces educational films on the Capitol, and sponsors an art program in the Capitol, among many other programs.

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What Is a Flag?

A flag is a piece of cloth, bunting, or similar material displaying the insignia of a nation, a military unit, or an individual. A flag is usually oblong in shape and is attached at one edge to a staff or halyard.

Throughout the centuries, the flag has been used for both ceremonial and practical purposes. Flags have led troops into battle and served as rallying points to identify friend from foe. The black flag was the symbol of the pirate. A yellow flag denotes the presence of an infectious disease. The white flag is universally used as a flag of surrender or truce. A flag is dipped to denote honor and respect. A flag flying at half-mast is the universal symbol of mourning.

Since World War II, scholars have recognized that flags are symbols that express the cultures and people that have created them. The scholarly study of the history, symbolism, etiquette, design, and manufacture of flags is known as vexillology.

What Is a Seal?

A seal is any one, or all, of three things: (1) the engraved block or piece of material (known as a die) from which impressions can be made on paper, clay or wax, (2) the impression made from the die, and (3) the material bearing the impression.

The earliest historical use of seals dates back to 4000 B.C. or earlier, when they were used to authenticate documents, often in the place of signatures. The seal serves the same purpose as a signature on a letter. It identifies and verifies the person or organization who has affixed the seal to the document.

What Is a Motto?

A motto is a word, phrase, or sentence that gives meaning to that to which it refers. A motto usually expresses a guiding principle, either religious, moral, or patriotic. The custom of using mottoes dates back to the earliest recorded history.

Monuments and tombs of ancient civilizations bear written mottoes or inscriptions.

The phrase "In God We Trust" has appeared on U.S. coins since the Civil War. On July 30, 1956, it became the official national motto. The three Latin phrases on the Great Seal of the United States are also similar to mottoes: *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one), *Annuit Coeptis* (He has favored our undertakings), and *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (a new order of the ages).

The Flag of the United States

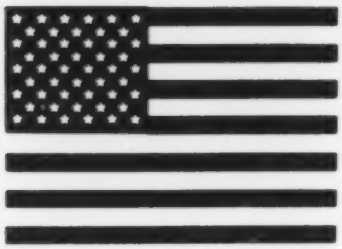
The flag of the United States of America symbolizes the rich history and heritage of our nation. The thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, represent the original thirteen states. The fifty stars on a blue background embody the 50 states that today comprise the United States.

The colors of the flag also embody the virtues on which the nation was founded. White is the traditional color of loyalty, while blue symbolizes unity, and red represents the sacrifice so often paid in blood that our nation might remain free.

In 1777, the Continental Congress resolved that the flag of the 13 United States "be thirteen stripes, alternative red and white, that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation." Since then, the flag has added stars as new states entered the Union. The last two were added in 1959 and 1960 after Alaska and Hawaii were admitted as states.

After Vermont and Kentucky were added to the Union, the flag was altered to 15 stars and 15 stripes in 1795. In 1818, President James Madison signed a bill returning the number of stripes from 15 to 13, and providing for the addition of stars as new states were admitted.

The rules and regulations governing the flag are found in Title 36, Chapter 10 of the United States Code.



The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Under the United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 10, Paragraph 172, the Pledge of Allegiance should be recited standing, facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. Uniformed personnel should render the military salute.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written by Reverend Francis Bellamy for use at the dedication of the World's Fair Grounds in Chicago on October 21, 1892. The wording was slightly altered in 1923 and 1924 by the First and Second National Flag Conferences. It was officially designated as the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag by Congress in 1945. The words "under God" were added in 1954 in a law signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag:

I pledge allegiance
to the flag
of the United States
of America,

and to the Republic
for which it stands,

one Nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty
and justice for all.

The Great Seal of the United States

On July 4, 1776, the same day that the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, it appointed Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams "to bring in a device for a seal of the United States of America." But it was not until six years later that Congress was able to settle upon a satisfactory design.

The obverse of the Seal was designed by Secretary of Congress Charles Thomson. The Latin motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, means "out of many, one," and refers to the union of several states into one nation. The eagle was adopted as the symbol of the United States, even though Franklin suggested that the turkey would be more appropriate. On its breast the eagle bears a shield with 13 stripes representing the 13 states. In its talons the eagle bears the symbols of peace and war — an olive branch and a bundle of arrows. Above the eagle the sun shines through a cloud surrounded by thirteen stars representing the rising glory of the United States.

The reverse of the Great Seal was designed by William Barton and shows an unfinished pyramid surmounted by an eye in a triangle with the sun shining through from behind. The Latin motto above the eye, *Annuit Coeptis*, has been translated as "He (God) has favored our undertakings." At the base of the pyramid is the date 1776 in Roman numerals. Beneath it is the Latin phrase, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, which has been translated as "a new order of the ages."

Although the Great Seal has been recut three times to improve its artistic appearance, it retains the exact symbolism and wording that Congress approved in 1782. The Great Seal is kept by the Secretary of State and it is affixed to documents only on the signed order of the President of the United States.

Excerpts from Flag Talks

"The flag of the American Union is a visible symbol of the ideal aspirations of the American people. It is the one focus in which all unite in reverential devotion."

Major Gen. Arthur MacArthur

"This flag means more than association and reward. It is the symbol of our national unity, our national endeavor, our national aspiration. It tells you of the struggle for independence, of union preserved, of liberty and union one and inseparable, of the sacrifices of brave men and women to whom the ideals and honor of this Nation have been dearer than life."

Charles Evans Hughes

"When I think of the flag . . . I see alternate strips of parchment upon which are written the rights of liberty and justice, and stripes of blood to vindicate those rights, and then, in the corner, a prediction of the blue serene into which every nation may swim which stands for these great things."

Woodrow Wilson

"I am the flag . . . By an act of Congress, I fly continuously over the Temple of Liberty — The United States Capitol. I will fly in perpetuity if we are worthy successors of those who fought and gave us freedom."

Fred Schwengel

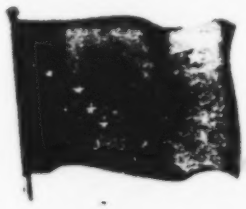
ALABAMA

Flag: A red Saint Andrew's Cross appears on a field of white.

Seal: Map of Alabama with the names of major rivers and neighboring states is depicted surrounded with the words, "Alabama, Great Seal."

Motto: *Audemus Jura Nostra Defendere,* meaning "We dare defend our rights."

ALASKA

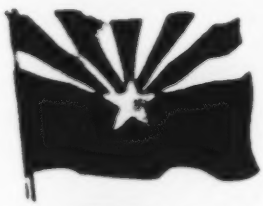


Flag: Eight gold stars from the Big Dipper and the North Star are set against a blue field.

Seal: In the inner circle, symbols of mining, agriculture and commerce appear against mountains and the northern lights. In the outer circle are a fur seal, a salmon, and the words, "The Seal of the State of Alaska."

Motto: North to the Future.

ARIZONA



Flag: A copper star appears on a field of half blue and half yellow, with red stripes representing Arizona rising in the face of a setting sun.

Seal: The seal consists of a sun rising over mountains, a reservoir and dam, fields and orchards, cattle, and a quartz mill with a miner surrounded with the words of the state motto, "Great Seal of Arizona," and the date of statehood, 1912.

Motto: *Ditat Deus,* meaning "God enriches."

ARKANSAS

Flag: A red field with a white diamond, on which appears the state name and four blue stars, within a blue diamond surrounded by 25 stars denote Arkansas as the 25th state.

Seal: An eagle with a scroll in its mouth inscribed with the state motto, holds arrows in one claw and an olive branch in the other, a shield on the eagle's breast engraved with a steamboat, a bee-hive, a plow and a sheaf of wheat; the goddess of liberty at the top surrounded by stars; the figure of an angel on the left inscribed "liberty" a sword on the right inscribed "Justice" surrounded with the words "Seal of the State of Arkansas."

Motto: *Regnat Populus,* meaning "the people rule."

CALIFORNIA

Flag: The upper area of the flag is a white field with a red star in the left-hand corner and a grizzly bear in the center. Beneath the bear are the words "California Republic" and beneath the white field is a red stripe.

Seal: The goddess Minerva, who sprung from the head of Jupiter just as California became a state without first being a territory is portrayed in the foreground with a bear at her feet feeding from a grapevine. Also pictured is a miner, a ship and the Sierra Nevada mountains with the state motto above.

Motto: *Eureka,* meaning "I have found it."

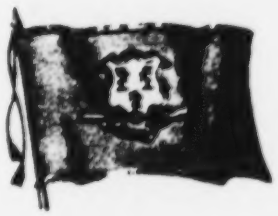
COLORADO

Flag: A red "C" filled in with gold is pictured on a blue field with a white stripe across its center.

Seal: The seal consists of a shield, the upper portion red with three snow-capped mountains and clouds, and the lower portion gold showing a miner's pick and shovel. The eye of God is depicted above the shield with a Roman fasces, symbolizing the republican form of government. The state motto appears below, and the whole surrounded by the words, "the State of Colorado" and "1876."

Motto: *Nil Sine Numine,* meaning "nothing without Providence."

CONNECTICUT



Flag: A white shield on which are pictured three grape vines is set against a blue background. Below the shield is a white streamer printed with the state motto.

Seal: An ellipse, in the border of which are the words *"Sigillum Reipublicae Connecticutensis,"* (seal of the state of Connecticut). Inside the ellipse are three grape vines and the state motto on a streamer.

Motto: *Qui Transtulit Sustinet,* meaning "He who transplanted still sustains."

DELAWARE

Flag: An image of a diamond is set on a blue field in the center of which is the state coat of arms featuring the state's agricultural resources (see "seal" below). Below the diamond is engraved the date of Delaware's statehood, December 7, 1787.

Seal: The state coat-of-arms pictures a sheaf of wheat and an ear of Indian corn and an ox on a shield with a river dividing the ox from the corn and wheat; with a soldier on the right and a farmer holding a hoe on the left of the shield. A ship appears at the top of shield. The seal is bordered with the words, "Great Seal of the State of Delaware." The state motto appears below the shield.

Motto: Liberty and Independence.

FLORIDA

Flag: A white field crossed with red diagonal bars contains the seal of the state in the center.

Seal: A sun, symbolizing glory, shines over a highland in the distance with a palmetto palm, a steamboat, and an Indian woman scattering flowers in the foreground. The whole is surrounded with the words "Great Seal of the State of Florida" and the state motto.

Motto: In God We Trust.

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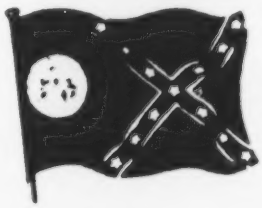
GEORGIA

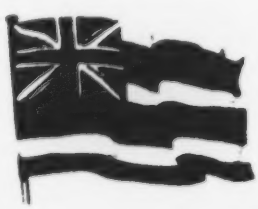


Flag: A vertical band of blue along the flagstaff encompasses the state coat-of-arms (three columns supporting an arch inscribed with the word "Constitution," intertwined with a streamer inscribed with the state motto. A soldier stands to the right and the words "State of Georgia 1776" surround the whole). The remainder of the flag is the same as the battle flag of the Confederacy.

Seal: The obverse is the coat-of-arms; the reverse features a ship at anchor receiving on board tobacco and cotton, a smaller boat signifying the state's internal trade, a man plowing, and a flock of sheep. The whole is surrounded by the words "Agriculture and Commerce 1776."

Motto: Wisdom, Justice and Moderation.

HAWAII

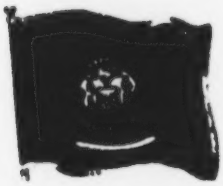


Flag: Eight horizontal stripes, alternately red, white and blue, represent the major islands with the British Union Jack (representing British rule of the island) in the upper left-hand corner.

Seal: The seal consists of the heraldic shield of the islands with King Kamehameha I, who united the islands, on one side of the shield and Liberty holding the flag on the other. Below the shield is a phoenix surrounded by taro leaves, banana leaves, and maidenhair fern. The words "State of Hawaii 1959" appear above and the state motto appears below.

Motto: *Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka Aina I Ka Pono,* meaning "the life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness."

IDAHO



Flag: A blue field is bordered with gilt fringe, with the state seal in the center and the words "State of Idaho" in gold letters on a red band below the seal.

Seal: A figure of a miner on the right represents the chief occupation of the state; and a woman on the left, symbolizes justice, liberty, and freedom, with a shield between them. On the shield appears mountains, rivers, forests, and a farm; the shield rests on a sheaf of grain and a is surmounted by the head of a stag above whose antlers is a scroll inscribed with the state motto. The whole is surrounded with the words "The Great Seal of the State of Idaho."

Motto: *Esto Perpetua*, meaning "May it endure forever."

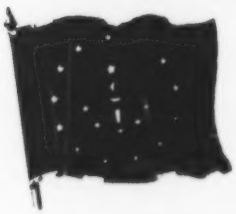
ILLINOIS

Flag: The seal of the state set in the center of a white field.

Seal: An American eagle perches on a boulder holding in its beak a scroll inscribed with the state motto. Below the eagle a shield rests on an olive branch. Also pictured are a prairie, a rising sun and on the boulder the dates 1818 and 1868, the years of the seal's introduction and revision. The words "Seal of the State of Illinois" and the date of statehood, "August 26th, 1818" are inscribed around the border.

Motto: State Sovereignty — National Union.

INDIANA



Flag: A blue field with a yellow border encompasses a gold torch representing liberty and enlightment, with six rays extending from the torch and thirteen stars surrounding it, which represent the thirteen original states, and five additional stars within the rays of the torch representing Indiana's entrance into the Union as the 19th state.

Seal: The seal depicts a forest and a woodsman felling a tree, a buffalo leaving the forest and fleeing across a plain with the setting sun in the background and the words "The Seal of the State of Indiana 1816" around the whole.

Motto: The Crossroads of America.

IOWA

Flag: Blue, white, and red vertical stripes surround a spread eagle in the cental white stripe with a blue streamer in its beak inscribed in white with the state motto and the word "Iowa" below the streamers in red letters.

Seal: The seal depicts on the left bottom, a wheat field and wheat sheaf with a sickle and other farm utensils; on the right side, a lead furnace and lead; in the center near the bottom, a soldier in front of a plow holding the liberty cap and American flag in his right hand a gun in his left; and behind the whole the Mississippi River. Near the top are an eagle with a streamer inscribed with the state motto. Forming a border are the words, "the Great Seal of the State of Iowa."

Motto: Our Liberties We Prize, and Our Rights We Will Maintain.

KANSAS

Flag: The state seal appears in the center of a blue field.

Seal: A rising sun is on the right; on the left a river and steamboat; in the foreground a man plowing; a train of ox wagons and buffalo pursued by Indians are in the background. Surrounding the whole are the words "Great Seal of the State of Kansas, January 29, 1861."

Motto: *Ad Astra per Aspera*, meaning "to the stars through difficulties."

KENTUCKY

Flag: Navy blue field surrounds the state seal in the center of the flag.

Seal: Two friends embrace each other with the state motto above and below them, and surrounding the whole two shoots of goldenrod and the words "Commonwealth of Kentucky."

Motto: United We Stand, Divided We Fall.

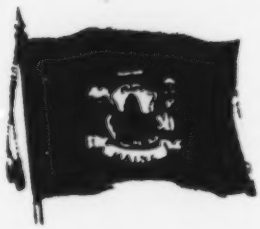
LOUISIANA

Flag: On a field of blue appears a white pelican feeding its young, symbolizing the state providing for its citizens. On a white ribbon beneath it is written the state motto.

Seal: The words "State of Louisiana" encircle scene of pelican and its young and the state motto.

Motto: Union, Justice, and Confidence.

MAINE

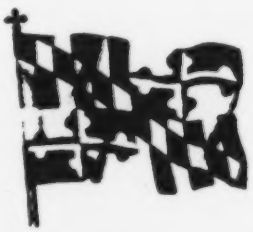


Flag: The coat-of-arms (a shield on which are featured a pine tree and a moose. Supporting the shield are a husbandman resting on a scythe and seaman resting on the anchor. Under the shield appears the name of the state, and above it the state motto and the North Star) set on a blue field.

Seal: Same as the coat-of-arms.

Motto: *Dirigo,* meaning "I direct."

MARYLAND



Flag: The flag consists of quartered arms of the Calvert and Crossland families (the founders of Maryland) with crosses in the upper right and lower left quarters and checks in the upper left and lower right quarters.

Seal: On the obverse Lord Baltimore is portrayed as a knight in armor on a horse. The surrounding Latin inscription means "Cecilius, Absolute Lord of Maryland and Avalon New Foundland, Baron of Baltimore. On the reverse is a shield on which appear the Calvert and Crossland arms surmounted by an earl's coronet and a helmet and supported by a farmer and fisherman. The state motto appears on a scroll below. The whole is surrounded by a Latin inscription meaning, "With the shield of thy favor hast thou compassed us" and 1632, the date of Maryland's first charter.

Motto: *Fatti Maschii, Parole Femine,* meaning "Manly deeds, womanly words."

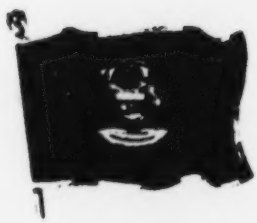
MASSACHUSETTS

Flag: On a white field appears the coat-of-arms (a blue shield on which is depicted in gold an Indian holding a bow and arrow with a five pointed star over his right arm. The crest is a wreath of blue and gold upon which is an arm bent at the elbow with a hand grasping a gold broadsword. Around the shield is a banner on which appears the state motto).

Seal: Same as the coat-of-arms, but it is surrounded with the inscription *"Sigillum Reipublicae Massachusettensis."*

Motto: *Ense Petit Placidam Sub Libertate Quietem,* meaning "By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty."

MICHIGAN



Flag: On a blue field is seen the coat-of-arms (a shield on which appears a peninsula becoming a lake, a man standing on the peninsula holding a gun at sunrise. The Latin word *Tuebor* (I will defend) appears above the shield and the state motto appears below in a scroll. An elk and moose are on either side of the shield; above it is an eagle with the words *E Pluribus Unum* and the name of the state surrounding the whole).

Seal: The coat-of-arms is surrounded with the words "The Great Seal of the State of Michigan" and the date "A.D. MDCCCXXXV" (1935, the date the state's constitution was adopted).

Motto: *Si Quoeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice,* meaning "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look around you."

State Flags and Seals

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IOWA
IOWA
KANSAS
KANSAS
KENTUCKY
LOUISIANA
MAINE
MARYLAND
MASSACHUSETTS
MICHIGAN
MINNESOTA
MISSISSIPPI
MISSOURI
MONTANA
NEBRASKA
NEVADA
NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW JERSEY
NEW MEXICO
NEW YORK

21

Overleaf: The flag of the United States. The names of the fifty states have been assigned to the fifty stars in the chronological order in which they entered the Union (reading from the top, left to right).

DELAWARE
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW JERSEY
GEORGIA
CONNECTICUT
MASSACHUSETTS
MARYLAND
SOUTH CAROLINA
NEW HAMPSHIRE
VIRGINIA
NEW YORK
NORTH CAROLINA
RHODE ISLAND
VERMONT
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
OHIO
LOUISIANA
INDIANA
MISSISSIPPI
ILLINOIS
ALABAMA
MAINE
MISSOURI
ARKANSAS
MICHIGAN
FLORIDA
TEXAS
IOWA
WISCONSIN
CALIFORNIA
MINNESOTA
OREGON
KANSAS
WEST VIRGINIA
NEVADA
NEBRASKA
COLORADO
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
MONTANA
WASHINGTON
IDAHO
WYOMING
UTAH
OKLAHOMA
NEW MEXICO
ARIZONA
ALASKA
HAWAII

[redacted]

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Alabama

Alaska

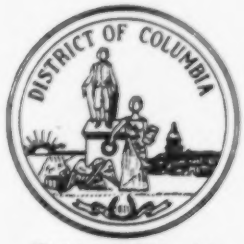
Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

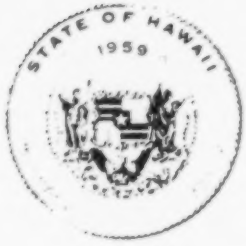


District of Columbia

Georgia

Delaware

Florida



Hawaii

Illinois

Indiana

Idaho

Kansas

Iowa

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Kentucky

Louisiana

Maryland

Maine

Massachusetts

Minnesota

Michigan

Missouri

Mississippi

Montana

Nevada

Nebraska

New Hampshire

New Mexico

New Jersey

New York

North Carolina

North Dakota

Ohio

Oklahoma

Oregon

South Carolina

Rhode Island

Pennsylvania

South Dakota

Texas

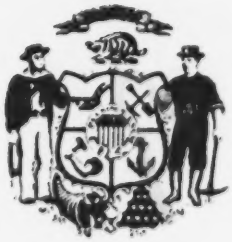
Tennessee

Utah

Virginia

Vermont

Washington

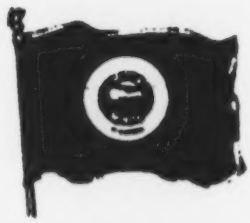


Wisconsin

West Virginia

Wyoming

MINNESOTA

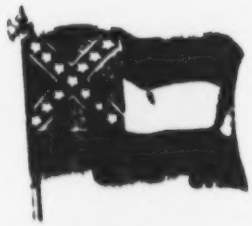


Flag: On a blue field, the state seal is surrounded by a wreath with the date of statehood 1858, the date of the founding of Ft. Snelling 1819, and the date of adoption of the flag 1893. Five clusters of gold stars and the state's name, Minnesota, appear in an outer circle around the seal. The flag is fringed with gold on three sides.

Seal: A farmer plows a field in the foreground, while an Indian rides on horseback across the plains before a rising sun. (In another version of the seal, a cowboy rides in the background). Pine trees and a waterfall represent the state's natural resources. The state motto appears above the scene, and the words "The Great Seal of the State of Minnesota," and the date of statehood 1858 surround the seal.

Motto: *L'Etoile du Nord,* meaning the North Star.

MISSISSIPPI

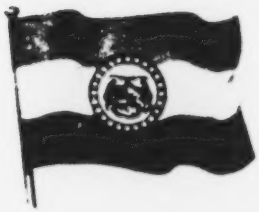


Flag: The state flag is comprised of three equal-sized stripes of blue, white, and red, with a red field in the upper left-hand corner on which appears crossed blue bars emblazoned with 13 white stars — a design similar to the Confederate battle flag.

Seal: The seal consists of the Coat of Arms surrounded by the words "The Great Seal of the State of Mississippi." An American eagle grasps an olive branch and a sheaf of arrows in its talons on the Coat of Arms.

Motto: *Virtute et armis,* meaning "By valor and arms."

MISSOURI

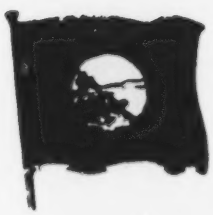


Flag: Three horizontal red, white and blue stripes with 24 stars encircle the coat-of-arms in the center. Two grizzly bears support a shield on which is depicted an American eagle and stars, a grizzly bear, and a cresent moon surrounded by the words "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." Below the shield is the state motto on a scroll and above it are a helmet and 24 stars. Beneath the motto is the date "MDCCCXX" (1820) the year of adoption of the state's first constitution.

Seal: The coat-of-arms surrounded with the words "The Great Seal of the State of Missouri."

Motto: *Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto,* meaning "The welfare of the people shall be the supreme law."

MONTANA



Flag: On a blue field, the Great Seal of the state is in the center, and with a golden fringe along the upper and lower borders of the flag. A flag with the same design was borne by the First Montana Volunteers in the Spanish-American War.

Seal: On the obverse side is depicted a central group representing a plow, a miner's pick and shovel; on the right is a scene of the great falls on the Missouri River; and on the left is mountain scenery. The seal is surmounted by the words "The Great Seal of the State of Montana." At the bottom is the state motto: *Oro y plata.*

Motto: *Oro y plata,* meaning "Gold and silver."

NEBRASKA

Flag: A field of national blue in the center of which is depicted the state seal in gold and silver.

Seal: The seal bears the state's motto: "Equality before the law," and represents the state's scenery and agricultural pursuits with a steamboat ascending the Missouri River; a blacksmith with hammer and anvil; a settler's cabin and sheaves of wheat and stalks of corn; and a train heading toward the Rocky Mountains.

Motto: Equality before the law.

NEVADA

Flag: Against a blue background, two sprays of sagebrush in the upper left corner surround a silver star above which a golden scroll with the words "Battle Born" refers to the state's entrance into the Union during the Civil War.

Seal: An ore-crushing mill, ore cart, and mine tunnel represent the mining industry, with agriculture symbolized by a plow, sickle, and a sheaf of wheat. A railroad, telegraph line, and the sun above the mountains are in the background. The surrounding inscription reads "The Great Seal of the State of Nevada."

Motto: All for your country.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Flag: The state seal appears in the center of a blue field. The seal is surrounded by a wreath of golden laurel leaves and nine stars signifying that New Hampshire was the ninth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

Seal: The central figure is that of a ship, believed to be the frigate *Raleigh* built in Portsmouth during the Revolution. In the left foreground is a granite boulder. A rising sun appears in the background. The date of the state's constitution, 1776, appears at the bottom border of the seal.

Motto: Live free or die.

NEW JERSEY

Flag: The state seal appears on a field of buff, the color worn on the facings of the uniforms of New Jersey's soldiers in the Revolutionary War.

Seal: The seal bears the inscription "Liberty and Prosperity," and the date 1776. Goddesses representing liberty and prosperity hold a shield bearing three plows, emphasizing the importance of agriculture to the state's history. The horse's head resting on a helmet represents commerce and sovereignty. The words "The Great Seal of the State of New Jersey" encircle the whole.

Motto: Liberty and prosperity.

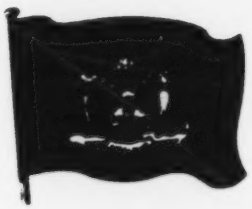
NEW MEXICO

Flag: The sun symbol of the Zia Indians appears in red against a yellow background.

Seal: The seal symbolizes that the state was originally part of Mexico. A large American bald eagle grasps three arrows in its talons and shields a smaller eagle grasping a snake in its beak and a cactus in its talons (the emblem of Mexico). The state motto appears beneath the eagles and the words "Great Seal of the State of New Mexico" and the date of statehood 1912 encircle the seal.

Motto: *Crescit eundo,* meaning "It grows as it goes."

NEW YORK



Flag: The state seal appears against a blue background. Until 1901, the flag was a buff color.

Seal: The state motto, "Excelsior," appears beneath a shield depicting a Hudson River scene. Sailing ships are depicted in front of mountains with a sun rising above. Goddesses of liberty and justice stand at either side of the shield. An eagle perched atop a globe rests above the shield. The seal is surrounded by the inscription "The Great Seal of the State of New York."

Motto: *Excelsior,* "ever upward."

32

NORTH CAROLINA

Flag: The flag consists of red and white stripes with a blue band in which appears the letters NC around a single white star. Yellow scrolls above and beneath bear the dates May 20, 1775 (when the state declared its independence) and July 4, 1776 (when North Carolina joined other colonists in voting for independence).

Seal: The state motto appears beneath a scene depicting the goddesses of liberty and plenty, and the date May 20, 1775.

Motto: *Esse quam videri,* meaning "To be rather than to seem."

NORTH DAKOTA

Flag: An eagle with outstretched wings bears in its beak a banner with the inscription *E Pluribus Unum* and in its talons a sheaf of arrows and an olive branch. Above the eagle are 13 stars and a sunburst, beneath the eagle are the words "North Dakota."

Seal: In the center is an elm tree; beneath it are a sheaf of wheat, a plow, an anvil, and a bow and three arrows. An Indian chases a buffalo toward the setting sun. The state motto and the inscription "Great Seal State of North Dakota" and the date October 1, 1889 encircle the seal.

Motto: Liberty and union, now and forever: one and inseparable.

33

OHIO

Flag: Swallow-tailed with three red and two white horizontal stripes; a triangular blue field with 17 stars (signifying that Ohio was the 17th state) surround a red "O" inside a white border.

Seal: A sheaf of wheat and 17 arrows in the foreground with the sun rising above the mountains represent Ohio as the first state west of the Alleghenies and the seventeenth state of the Union. The inscription reads "The Great Seal of the State of Ohio."

Motto: With God all things are possible.

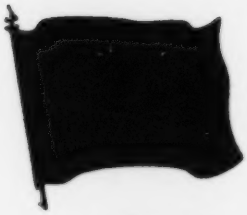
OKLAHOMA

Flag: Against a blue background, the word "Oklahoma" appears beneath an Osage warrior's shield bearing a crossed peace pipe and olive branch. Seven eagle feathers hang from the shield.

Seal: Forty-five small stars encircle one large star representing Oklahoma as the 46th state. Each corner of the large five-pointed star symbolizes one of the five great Indian nations — Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, Creek and Cherokee. The words "Great Seal of the State of Oklahoma" and the date 1907 of statehood encircle the seal.

Motto: *Labor omnia vincit,* meaning "Labor conquers all things."

OREGON

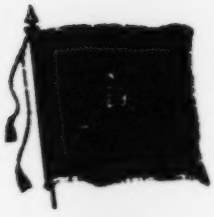


Flag: The two-sided flag consists of a blue field with gold lettering and illustrations. The obverse has the state seal and 33 stars with the words "State of Oregon" above and the date of statehood 1859 below.

Seal: An eagle atop a shield supported by 33 stars. On the shield are depicted mountains, forests, an elk, a covered wagon, wheat, a plow, a pickax, and the sun above the Pacific ocean and a ship.

Motto: *Alis volat Propriis*, meaning "She flies with her own wings."

PENNSYLVANIA

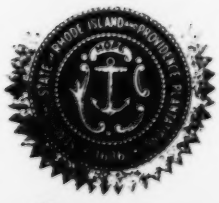


Flag: The state coat of arms (the state seal and motto with facing horses on either side) appears on a blue background.

Seal: An eagle perches atop a shield depicting a ship, a plow, and sheaves of wheat, all symbolic of the state's economy.

Motto: Virtue, liberty, and independence.

RHODE ISLAND



Flag: A gold anchor, blue motto, surrounded by thirteen gold stars representing the original colonies are pictured on a white background edged in gold.

Seal: The anchor, the symbol of hope, and the state motto appear with the date 1636 when Roger Williams founded Providence, Rhode Island.

Motto: Hope.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Flag: A silver crescent new moon and a palmetto tree are seen against a blue background. The blue color and the crescent are derived from the uniforms of South Carolina regiments in the Revolution.

Seal: Two ovals: the left represents a palmetto tree with the dates March 26 and July 4 (the dates in 1776 of state and national independence), twelve spears and a Latin motto meaning "Who will separate them?", beneath which is another motto meaning "He has planted one better than the fallen," all of which refers to the battle of Ft. Moultrie in 1776; the right oval shows the goddess of hope *(Spes).* Each oval bears one of the state mottoes.

Motto: *Animis opibusque parati,* meaning "Prepared in mind and resources," *Dum spiro spero,* meaning "While I breathe, I hope."

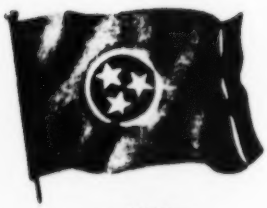
SOUTH DAKOTA

Flag: The state seal is centered on a white or light blue background with the words "South Dakota" above and "The Sunshine State" below.

Seal: A pastoral scene beneath the state motto depicts the Missouri River winding between hills and plains with symbols of mining (a furnace), commerce (steamboat), and agriculture (farmer plowing, cattle, field of corn). The words "State of South Dakota Great Seal" and the date 1889 of statehood encircle the seal.

Motto: Under God the people rule.

TENNESSEE

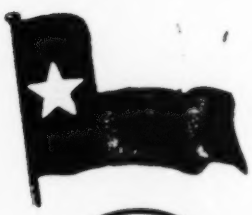


Flag: Three white stars in a white-rimmed blue circle on a red background represent the state's three geographical regions.

Seal: Agriculture is represented by a plow, a sheaf of wheat, and a cotton plant; Commerce is represented by a riverboat. The Roman numeral XVI and the date 1796 signify that Tennessee became the 16th state in that year.

Motto: Agriculture and Commerce.

TEXAS



Flag: A horizontal bar of blue with a single white five-pointed star and two horizontal bars of white and red compose the state flag of Texas.

Seal: The seal consists of a single five-pointed star encircled by a wreath of olive and live oak branches with the words "The State of Texas" at the top.

Motto: Friendship.

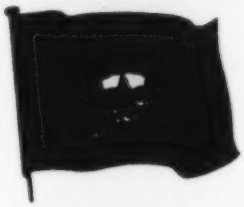
UTAH

Flag: Inside a thin gold circle the coat of arms and the year 1896 of statehood are centered on a blue field fringed with gold.

Seal: A shield flanked by crossed American flags displays a beehive with the state motto and six arrows above, lilies on either side, and the year 1847 below. The words "The Great Seal of the State of Utah" and the date of statehood 1896 encircle the seal.

Motto: Industry.

VERMONT

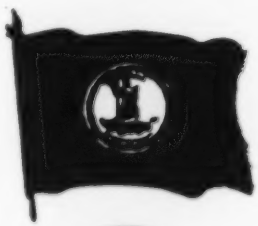


Flag: The state coat of arms appears centered in a blue field.

Seal: The state motto appears beneath a rural scene depicting the forests of the Green Mountains and a pine tree with 14 branches, representing the fact that Vermont was the 14th state to enter the union.

Motto: Vermont, Freedom, and Unity.

VIRGINIA

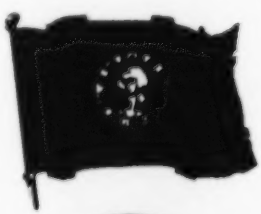


Flag: The state seal appears centered against a blue background.

Seal: The front side of the shield shows Virtue, clad as an Amazon warrior, standing over a defeated tyrant, beneath whom is the state motto. The reverse side depicts the goddesses of eternity, liberty, and agriculture.

Motto: *Sic semper tyrannis*, meaning "Thus always to tyrants."

WASHINGTON



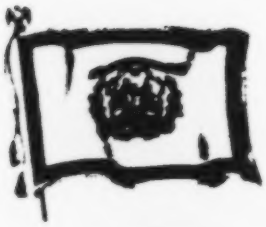
Flag: The state seal is centered on a dark green field.

Seal: A portrait of President George Washington is surrounded by the words "The Seal of the State of Washington" and the date 1889 when the state was admitted to the Union.

Motto: *Alki*, a Native American word meaning "By and by."

38

WEST VIRGINIA

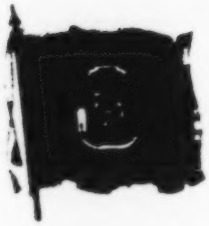


Flag: A white field is bordered by a strip of blue on which the state coat of arms is centered, wreathed by rhododendron leaves with a banner bearing the words "State of West Virginia."

Seal: A farmer and a miner stand beside an ivy-covered rock bearing the date 1863 when West Virginia entered the Union. Two hunter's rifles rest upon a cap of liberty in front of the rock, and the state motto appears at the bottom of the seal.

Motto: *Montani semper liberi,* meaning "Mountaineers are always free."

WISCONSIN



Flag: The state coat of arms appears centered on a dark blue field which is fringed on three sides.

Seal: The state coat of arms is surrounded by the words "Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin" and thirteen stars. The shield is divided into four parts representing agriculture, mining, navigation, and manufacturing. On either side are a sailor and a miner. Above the shield is a badger and the state motto; below the shield are a horn of plenty and a pyramid of pig iron.

Motto: Forward.

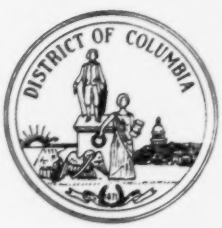
WYOMING

Flag: A blue shield is surrounded by a red and white border, in the center is the profile of a buffalo bearing the state seal.

Seal: A central female figure atop a pedestal holds a banner with the state's motto, "Equal rights;" two male figures flank pedestals bearing lamps of knowledge on which are draped banners with the words Livestock, Grain, Mines, and Oil. At the bottom are the dates 1869 and 1890 and the Roman numeral XLIV signifying that Wyoming became the 44th state in 1890.

Motto: Equal rights (1955).

DISTRICT of COLUMBIA



Flag: Based on George Washington's coat-of-arms, it consists of a white field on which appears two horizontal red stripes and above which are three red stars.

Seal: The Potomac River separates the District from Virginia, over which the sun is rising. In the foreground Justice, holding a wreath and a tablet with the word "Constitution" stands beside a statue of George Washington. To her left is the Capitol; to her right, an eagle and various agricultural products. Below is the motto and the date 1871 and "District of Columbia."

Motto: *Justitia Omnibus*, meaning "Justice for all."

Flags Flown Over The United States Capitol Building

The flag, that patriòtic symbol of the United States, flies daily over another important symbol of the democratic nature of the U.S. government – the U.S. Capitol Building.

Since the early 1800's the U.S. flag has been flown over the Capitol. In 1894 the Congress made the practice official by appropriating $100 for flags to be flown over the East and West fronts of the Capitol. The first Capitol flags made available to the public were those flown April 4, 1917, the day the U.S. declared war on Germany. Those flags were auctioned to raise money for the Libery Loan Drive.

Following World War I, Capitol flags were generally discarded and burned after they were flown until Members of Congress began requesting them to give to schools and civic organizations. By 1937, the Capitol Architect's Office had established a procedure whereby Members of Congress could buy flags from the Capitol stationery office. The flags would then be flown for a short time on a pole on the roof of the Capitol. By 1939 anyone could buy a flag through their Congressional representatives.

In 1937 only six flags were flown for Members of Congress, but over the years the popularity of Capitol flags increased dramatically. Following the publication of articles about the procedure, as well as historical events such as the admission of Alaska and Hawaii as states and bicentennial activities, the number of requests has soared. On July 4, 1976 a grand total of 10,471 flags were flown in one day. In 1988, the total number of Capitol flags requested by Congressional offices for constituents was 114,151.

Any person can write to his or her Senators or Representatives and for a reasonable fee (under $20) receive a piece of history – a flag that has flown over the U.S. Capitol Building.

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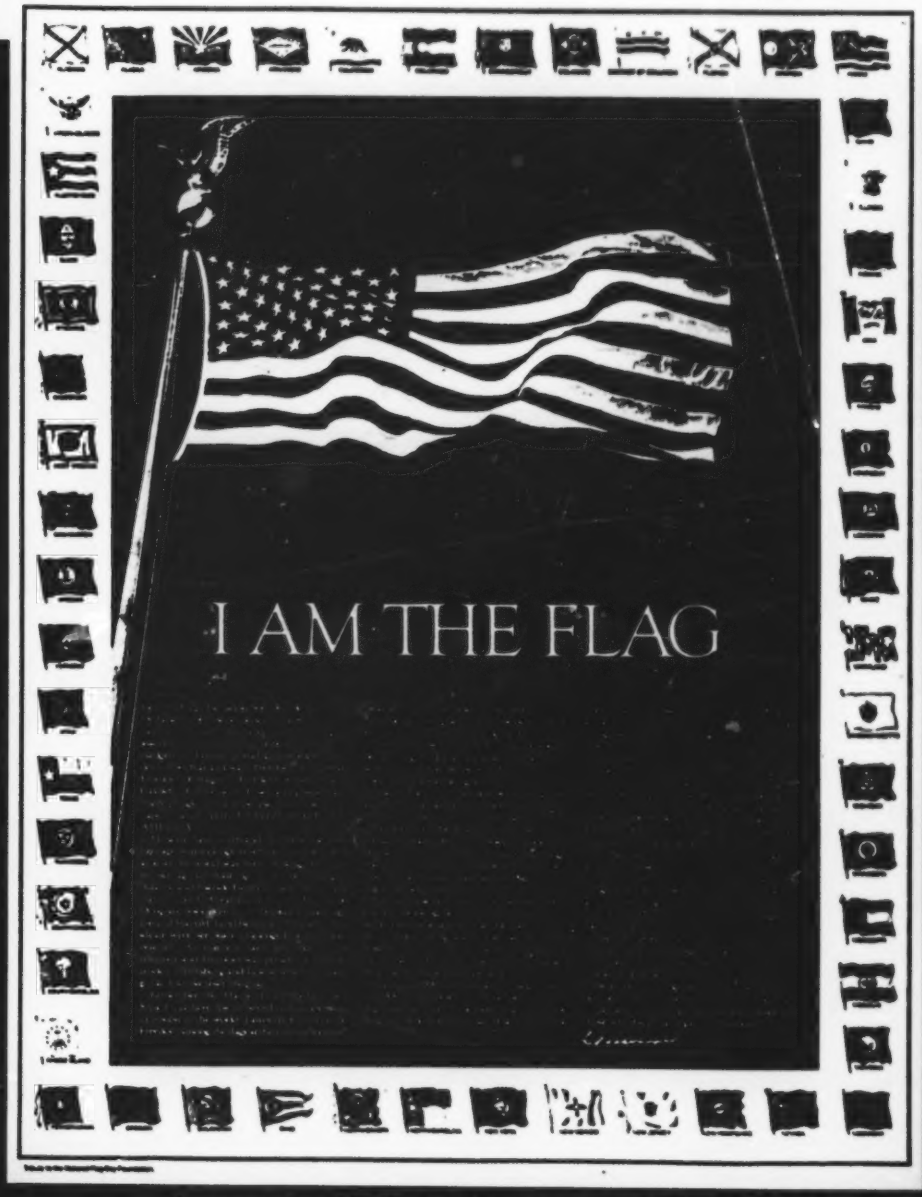
Portrait of American Flags Poster



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Produced by The United States Capitol Historical Society in cooperation with The Republican Heritage Foundation

Printed by Wolk Press, Inc., Woodlawn, Maryland 21207